

REMARKS

Claims 1-29 and 31-33 are pending in this application. By this Amendment, claim 1 is amended. No new matter is added, because the amendment incorporates allowable subject matter from now-canceled claim 30. Claim 30 is canceled without prejudice to, or disclaimer of, the subject matter recited in that claim. Reconsideration of the application in view of the above amendments and the following remarks is respectfully requested.

Entry of the amendment is proper under 37 CFR §1.116(b)(1) because the amendments place the application in condition for allowance based on the indication of allowable subject matter in the Office Action. The amendments are necessary and were not earlier presented because they are made in response to the indication of allowable subject matter made in the final rejection. Entry of the amendments is thus respectfully requested.

The Office Action, on page 2, indicates that the previous rejection under 35 U.S.C. §112 has been withdrawn in light of the previous amendment. The Office Action, on page 41, indicates that claim 30 would be allowable if rewritten to overcome the rejection under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, to include all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Applicants note that the asserted rejection of claim 30 under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, on page 41 of the Office Action appears to be an error because of the indication on page 2 of the Office Action that the previous §112 rejection has been withdrawn. As such, Applicants appreciate the indication that claim 30 recites allowable subject matter.

The Office Action, on page 2, rejects claims 1-7, 10-13 and 33 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2003/0056440 to Aoyama et al. (hereinafter "Aoyama"). The Office Action, on pages 14, 16 and 17 rejects claims 8, 9 and 12-29 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Aoyama, alone, or in view of U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2001/0016276 to Yamanashi, and/or in

view of U.S. Patent No. 6,063,515 to Epp et al. (hereinafter "Epp"). The Office Action, on pages 20, 26, 28, 34 and 35 rejects claims 1-29 and 31-33 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over various combinations of U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2003/0072978 to Meyer et al. (hereinafter "Meyer"), Epp, U.S. Patent No. 6,410,175 to Tillmetz et al. (hereinafter "Tillmetz"), Aoyama, Yamanashi and U.S. Patent No. 6,391,484 to Keskula et al. (hereinafter "Keskula"). These rejections are respectfully traversed.

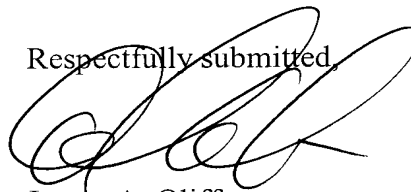
Claim 1 is amended to incorporate the allowable subject matter recited in now-canceled claim 30. Therefore, claim 1 is allowable for the same reasons that now-canceled claim 30 is allowable.

Further, because claims 2-29 and 31-33 depend from an allowable base claim, they too are allowable for at least the reasons claim 1 is allowable, as well as for the separately patentable subject matter that each of these claims recites.

In view of the foregoing, Applicants respectfully submit that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and prompt allowance of claims 1-29 and 31-33 are earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable in order to place this application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact Applicants' undersigned representative at the telephone number set forth below.

Respectfully submitted,



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